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Dear Irving, *Krop*

3/10/91

I've been intending to write you for a couple of years, didn't have an address, then thought of asking Alma, got it and have misplaced it. With about a quarter of an hour before I may take a nap - it is 7:45 a.m. and I've been up since 2:45 - I'll at least begin the letter. (I've been an early riser since World War II, like it, find it the most productive time of the day, but since open-heart surgery 15 months ago from time to time, usually after frequent rousing and immediate return to sleep that others who've had this operation tell me is normal for them, too, I'm wide awake earlier than I intend.) I've not done any writing for quite a few years because I can't stand still to use the files and I can't use the stairs often and the files are in the basement. (By lawsuits I've gotten about a third of a million pages of once-withheld records on the JFK and King assassinations.) And because I was, perhaps wrongly, afraid that were I to write off the top of the head, without the documentation - have, it could reduce the credence given to my seven published book and they are basic on the two assassination. Factual, not the theorizing that attracts popular interest and attention. Then, in correspondence with dear friends of my youth, I began to reminisce and one of them pressed me to write memoirs. I do not have that kind of ego but with all of this reminiscing and thinking about what is a void for me, our European antecedents, I got interested in them. My parents would never talk about their lives in the old country before us when Alma and I were children but I did remember that my father's side of the family came from Baronovka and I've located that on a map. But I've learned little about the past other than this. I wondered during and after World War II, for example, whether I had any living but unknown relatives who might have fallen victim to the Nazi horrors. I've ~~asked~~ asked Alma and Gloria to ask the surviving Segals if they have any recollections of where their part of the family came from and any other recollections they might share but when they've been together, as at what I'd have dearly loved to have been able to be, Harry's 85th birthday party, they never really got around to it. If I remember correctly, your maternal grandfather was their uncle. So, I hope that your family was less reticent to talk about its past and that you may remember some and then would not mind telling me. In part this is curiosity and in part because I think it would not be inappropriate for the archive of some 60 file cabinets plus countless boxes that will be at a fine small local college.

Now that it is close to safe for a nap, I lay this aside with an explanation of my limitations and awful typing. I had a left femoral bypass in 1980, clots broke loose the day I left Georgetown Univ. Hospital, and by the time I could be taken back and they got all they could out my left leg would take only about 5 minutes of normal walking before I lost control of it. Six months later there was a total blockage there and only after the wonderful surgeon who'd performed the original bypass and both emergency operations died and I got his records I learned that the original implant was a bit too long. Other

similar complications over the ensuing years, some from gross negligence and some I'm sure unavoidable, have reduced my mobility more, as have the accumulating years. The open-heart surgery was quite successful but a hernia developed. So, since 1975, I've been under instructions to keep my legs up when I'm not walking and I do when typing and with the typewriter to the side my typing is about like this all the time.

Before the nap, as I recall you lived when a boy at 93 Hart St., in Brooklyn and I am pretty sure I remember hearing you play the violin on the Horn & Hardart Children's Hour when you were about 12 one Sunday. Then the next thing I knew we saw each other again at the Silverman's 50th anniversary.

To explain why I'm writing at odd moments, an old friend who is a man of means brought his son here for me to help him with a book project on which he is started. I was able to. When this friend learned that I'd suspended work on what by content at least will be an exceptional book on the King assassination because of the limitations on my use of my files, he told me to get a student to help me part time and that he'd pay her. (The fine local college is still almost all a women's college.) I have one who is working out well. She returns from her spring break today and I have a fair amount of retrieving awaiting her. Then I'll be busy when I have the energy with what she fetches. At the moment I'm awaiting a call from the lab for the results of the proteomes I have twice a week. Within given parameters I do not have to consult the doctor but if it is not within them I do. And getting through on the phone can take a long time. I do not concentrate as well as I used to so until that is past I don't return to writing that requires concentration.

The friend to whom the enclosed letter went this ^{morning} ~~morning~~ was 12 when he, his mother and siblings were able to escape the pogroms after World War I, is one of the developers of nylon. The Sam to whom I refer is a rabbi. We three were very close as boys. Unfortunately I used a blue pen in making corrections and the copier didn't pick them up. I think you can make out what I was saying through the errors. To a degree it gets to some of what I am getting at.

I do not exaggerate when I say I have done all the basic real work on these two turning-points of history, a fact that may not have been clear to you because of the demands of your own busy life. What I leave will be the archive on both. The originals will not only be a permanent archive at this college - it is already planning to make my work available to other institutions by modern technology I do not understand. So, scholars of the future may wonder what impelled one man, who began broke and in debt, to undertake so enormous a task and to persevere against so much official opposition, how he was able to sue and get so many previously withheld records - Congress even amended the Freedom of Information Act over one of these many lawsuits - and why he has given it all away with no quid pro quo. One aspect of this is where I come from. In this sense there is relevance in what I can learn about both sides of my family before emigration. In particular, if it can be learned, surviving the pogroms. What they did in Russia, too, things like that.

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I have a vague recollection of a story I heard when I was quite young, a story that may not be factual or I may have distorted in trying to recall it, that Max Segal had to flee with his family with no warning and just loaded them on a wagon and took off. In my recollection your grandfather was involved. There may be no truth in it, it may have been romanticized, etc., but if you recall anything along this line I'd be quite interested.

Of the many relatives of their generation I remember the Segals were my favorites. Perhaps because they were so warm. My clear recollections of them go back 70 years, I liked them that much. I can still see their livingroom as of that time, when they lived and had their schvitz on Eighth Street in Phila., just south of Girard Avenue. That was around the corner from the business of a great-uncle on my father's side of the family.

I ramble and now I'll phone the lab because they should have phoned me by now.

I'm sorry I don't travel well. Being driven by my wife's sister up to Wilmington when my mother was alive used to weary me too much. And I'm weaker now. I'd like to be able to get to New York again and enjoy what I used to enjoy there and to see you but it would be at least unwise.

I hope you have some recollections of what I hope you were told and that you can find the time to convey them with all the detail possible.

Thanks, and with best wishes to you all,

David